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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Developments in Indochina

DIA and Army
reviews completed.

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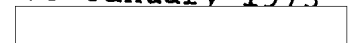
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DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

(Information as of 1500)

SOUTH VIETNAM

The intensity of the fighting is diminishing throughout the country. In MR-1, the Communists are using artillery and tanks against government positions in the two northern provinces and along Route 1. In MR-2, the fighting is concentrated on Routes 1, 14, and 19; in MR-3, it is along Routes 1 and 15. The delta is relatively quiet. There are no confirmed major relocations by NVA or Viet Cong main-force units since the cease-fire. The government is trying to restore a business-as-usual atmosphere throughout the country. There are some demonstrations and flag raising celebrations in areas controlled by both sides.

NORTH VIETNAM

The rhetoric from Hanoi emphasizes what has been accomplished; the Viet Cong are highlighting what still needs to be done.

CAMBODIA

There is a lull in the fighting in Cambodia.

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Former Prime Minister In Tam has proposed a coalition commission of ten members to work out a cease-fire and a new government of national union.

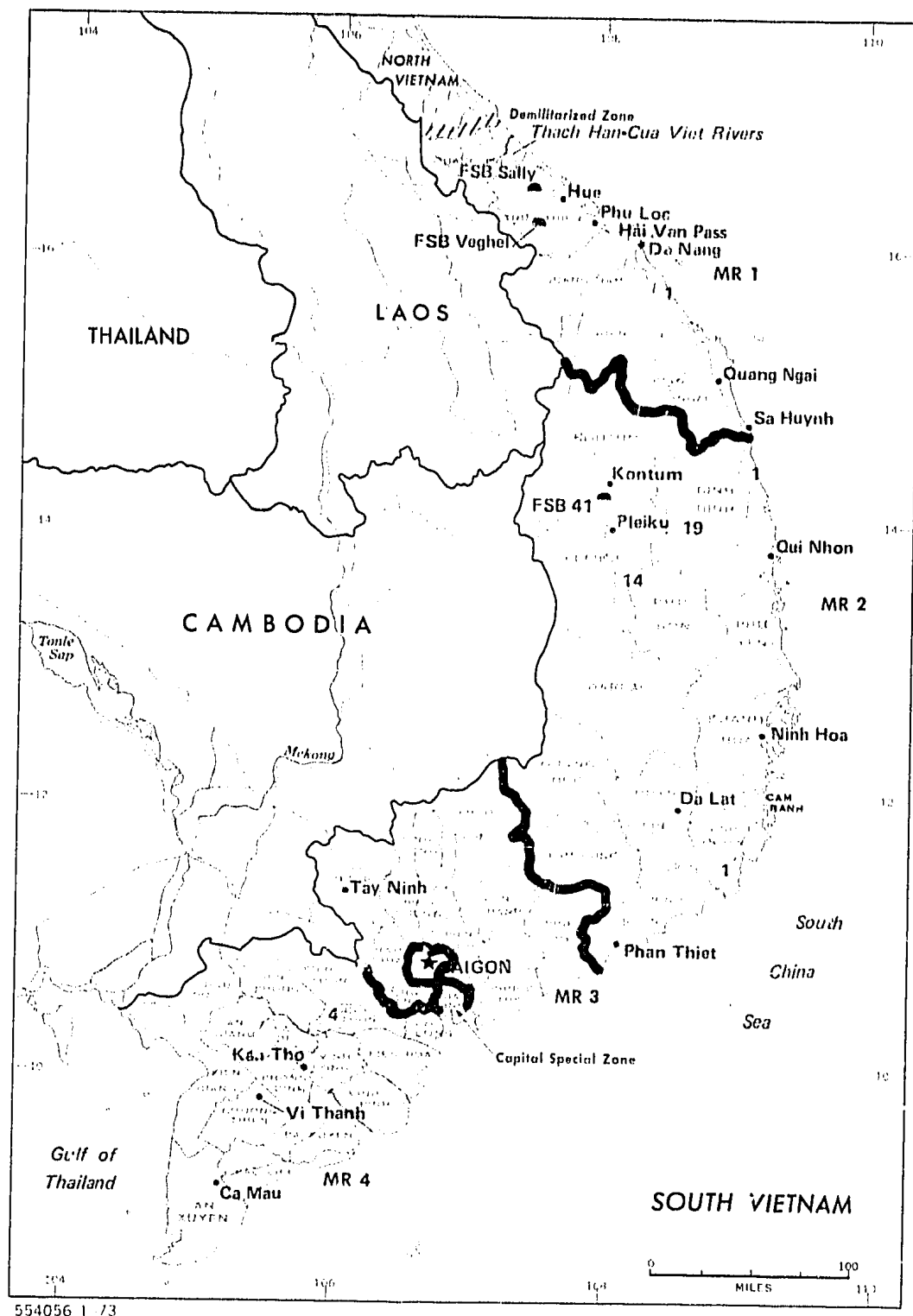
LAOS

Inconclusive fighting continues on several fronts in Laos. Some members of the Communist negotiating team have returned to Vientiane--but not special adviser Phoumi Vongvichit.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Communist resupply activity continues and the logistic apparatus in the Panhandle is being maintained.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Fighting continues throughout the country, but the intensity appears to have diminished somewhat from the high levels immediately following the cease-fire hour. It is not possible

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to determine with accuracy how many of the incidents have been initiated by the Communists and how many are the result of government efforts to retake land lost before the cease-fire went into effect. Much of the current fighting involves government efforts to break Communist road-blocks set up to disrupt government movement while the Communists were attempting to penetrate the countryside. The government is also still trying to push enemy forces out of hamlets and villages overrun just before the cease-fire went into effect.

In Military Region (MR) 1, light artillery fire was reported on 29 January against Airborne units near the Thach Han River. There is no additional information on the status of marine elements earlier reported under attack at the Navy Base on the Cua Viet River. Renewed fighting picked up northwest of Fire Support Base (FSB) Sally in the vicinity of the An Lao Bridge. Two enemy tanks were reported destroyed near FSB Veghel in Thua Thien Province, and skirmishes were reported near the district capital of Phu Loc and in the vicinity of the Hai Van Pass along Route 1. Farther south, fairly heavy fighting was reported in the Que Son Valley on 28 January as enemy armor-supported attacks were made against units from the South Vietnamese 3rd Division. In Quang Ngai Province, fighting was still in progress along Route 1 near Sa Huynh. The highway was interdicted in several places, and a nearby fire support base was under attack.

In MR-2, government forces trying to clear Route 14 south of Pleiku were fired upon by units from the North Vietnamese 320th Division. The

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highway remains interdicted at this location and near FSB 41 between Pleiku and Kontum cities. There also are reports that the Communists are in control of Route 19 at the Pleiku/Binh Dinh border. Fighting continues between South Vietnamese territorial and Viet Cong troops in the three northern districts of Binh Dinh Province. Several hamlets and villages reportedly have changed hands during the past few hours. Route 1 southwest of the provincial capital of Qui Nhon has been interdicted, and farther south the highway has been closed just north of the district capital of Ninh Hoa in Khanh Hoa Province.

Elsewhere in the region, opposing forces are fighting outside Phan Thiet in Binh Thuan Province and near Da Lat City in Tuyen Duc. Reportedly, the government province chief of Binh Thuan, Colonel Nghia, was contacted on the radio on 29 January by an individual representing himself as the Communist province chief. This is one of the first surfacing of Communist governmental personalities. Colonel Nghia agreed to let the Viet Cong forces withdraw from the areas, and both parties decided to reduce the level of fighting.

Fighting continues in most provinces of MR-3, and General Minh, the government's regional commander, said that by evening he had catalogued 207 Communist cease-fire violations. Fighting is still in progress around Tay Ninh City. Route 15 remains blocked near Long Thanh in Bien Hoa Province, and Route 1 is still closed between Bien Hoa and the Long Khanh province borders.

In the delta, activity is now on a relatively small scale. The government claims it has driven Viet Cong units out of 25 of the 50 places the Communists overran before the cease-fire and that all main roads and canals are open. American advisers indicate, however, that the Communists have established a foothold along Route 4 just north of Ca Mau

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City in An Xuyen Province and that security along a major canal between the provincial capitals of Can Tho and Vi Thanh is "debatable." In Cau Mau City, US observers report that the National Police have quietly begun implementing a plan for arresting "or otherwise neutralizing" known and suspected Viet Cong cadre.

No Main Force Deployments

There have been no confirmed deployments by major North Vietnamese and Viet Cong main forces since the cease-fire went into effect on 28 January.

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In the western delta provinces of Kien Giang and Chau Doc, it is possible that elements of the Communist "Phuoc Long Front" are attempting to infiltrate from Cambodia into South Vietnam. At least three North Vietnamese infantry regiments from this command are already in South Vietnam.

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Situation in the Rural Areas

Almost no information is yet available on the situation in Communist-held areas. There are scattered reports from various provinces of Communist flag-raising efforts and leaflet dissemination and at least one report of the abduction and murder of a government hamlet chief. Some hamlets in the delta that are known to harbor numerous Communist sympathizers or supporters have been almost entirely free of overt enemy activity since the start of the cease-fire.

In government areas, residents of larger cities such as Hue and Da Nang are resuming a business-as-usual attitude, but traffic in and out of major towns remains light and police controls are in effect. Most officials and the public at large remain somewhat wary, but banners hailing the cease-fire are beginning to be displayed, and in Quang Ngai City the province chief is contemplating organizing pro-government demonstrations to take place when the inspection teams arrive.

Government information cadre are reported active in the delta posting signs and distributing government flags, and more than 2,000 new military cadets have arrived to begin psychological operations covering several delta provinces. Some independent politicians in Saigon are speculating that the fighting will die down shortly and that the war will slide into a political phase.

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NORTH VIETNAM

The North Vietnamese party-government appeal and the NLF-PRG joint appeal, both of which were issued over the weekend, follow a formula that is being adopted by other Vietnamese Communist pronouncements--lavish praise for all those who contributed to the "victory" and pledges to respect the agreement in a spirit of brotherhood, with exhortations to the other side to do likewise. The theme that the struggle will persist is present, but it is submerged in rhetoric about the "dawn of peace."

Some hints of Communist priorities and tactics do come through. Language in one passage of the North Vietnamese statement, for example, indicates that reconstruction and "building socialism" in the North will now be Hanoi's primary concerns. The slogans put out by the North to mark the occasion seem to take the same tack by urging "everything for the cause of socialist construction in North Vietnam" before they return to the usual call for "everything for the blood-sealed South Vietnam." Both the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong appeals call for the establishment of "normal relations" between North and South. The North Vietnamese are obviously interested in regularizing the contacts between the two zones so as to make their influence as widely felt in the South as possible. The PRG seems, in addition, to be trying to use the issue to enhance its own legitimacy; the Viet Cong appeal emphasized that it was the "two parties" in South Vietnam that should hold consultations with the North. With the legitimacy issue no doubt again in mind, the PRG/NLF pronouncement also urged other countries to establish relations with the PRG.

There has been more than one hint in the recent pronouncements that the paths of the Northern and Southern Communists are not entirely convergent.

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This appears in small ways--for instance, when the NLF and PRG call for the establishment of councils of reconciliation and concord "at all levels" and Nhan Dan urges their establishment "at various levels" (emphasis supplied). Moreover, the overall tone of the statements from the two parties seems to differ. The NLF and PRG find it necessary to express the "hope" that Saigon will not delay the formation of councils of reconciliation; Hanoi says it is "a certainty" that the Southerners will unite, although at the same time it calls for vigilance against the remaining "reactionaries." Nhan Dan comes out with the flat statement that the "urgent demand" of the South is "national concord"; indeed, it puts words into the mouths of the NLF and PRG by claiming that they have "affirmed once again that the national concord policy is a fundamental, clear-cut, and long-term policy." No such formulation appears in the NLF/PRG statement. In general, the rhetoric out of Hanoi tends to emphasize what has been achieved, that from the Viet Cong highlights what remains to be done.

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CAMBODIA

Khmer insurgent forces thus far have made no significant effort to take advantage of the government's cessation of all offensive operations; combat activity throughout the country remains at substantially reduced levels. The lull in the fighting may be only temporary.

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The movement of insurgent reinforcements into the region southeast of the capital over the past week has increased Communist strength within a 25-mile radius of Phnom Penh to between 7,000 and 8,500 troops, according to the US Defense Attache's latest estimate.

Despite this increase, there is still no evidence that the Communists are capable of launching a major ground attack against Phnom Penh.

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Political Developments in Cambodia

Former Democratic Party leader In Tam has floated a proposal for the establishment of a small coalition commission as a first step toward national reconciliation. In an article in a local newspaper on 28 January, In Tam called for the formation of a ten-man commission consisting of one representative each from the old and new National Assemblies, the Senate, the Council of the Republic, the army, the Democratic and Republican Parties, youth, and the pro- and anti-Sihanouk factions of the Khmer insurgency. After agreeing on the terms of a cease-fire, the commission would become a "government of national union" charged with revising the constitution and organizing free elections to be held within one year under the supervision

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of the International Control Commission. Following the elections, government and insurgent military forces would be merged.

In Tam's plan stipulates that Lon Nol would remain as president until the end of his present five-year mandate. Sihanouk is excluded from the scenario. In Tam recommends that if the insurgents fail to join the commission immediately, the commission should begin to work anyway and be given sufficient powers to achieve its objectives.

There evidently has been no government reaction to the proposal as yet. Although Lon Nol would probably object to some of its provisions, he at least would agree that Sihanouk should have no role in any political settlement of the war. In Tam's proposal may well find a wide audience among Phnom Penh's war-weary citizenry.

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LAOS

Communist shellings on 28 January damaged two of the three howitzers at Bouam Long and killed some civilians. Cher Pao Mua, the base commander, fears that the increased shelling in the past few days is a prelude to an attempt to overrun his stronghold. The North Vietnamese still have elements of three infantry regiments near the base, as well as artillery and antiaircraft units, but they have been subjected to numerous air strikes and have yet to mount any significant ground attacks.

For the third consecutive day, Communist gunners used artillery to shell Long Tieng. These brief shellings have so far caused little damage.

Government forces in the Route 13 sector are still trying to clear Communist units north and south of Sala Phou Khoun. This weekend lead elements of an irregular task force pushed to within five miles of the road junction from the north, but dispersed following an attack by a Pathet Lao company supported by artillery and heavy weapons. Other government units have pushed from the south to within three miles of Sala Phou Khoun against sporadic resistance. Government commanders believe that most of the Pathet Lao and dissident neutralist units that had been in this area have withdrawn to the east.

Communist military activity in southern Laos has decreased markedly. The eight irregular battalions just east and south of Muong Phalane in the central panhandle reported no significant enemy activity on either 27 or 28 January.

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Farther south, irregular forces near Saravane and at Thateng and Paksong reported no significant enemy activity on 28 January.

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The Political Situation in Laos

Communist chief negotiator Phoune Sipraseuth returned this weekend to Vientiane after ten days of consultations in Hanoi and at the Lao Communist headquarters in Sam Neua. On his arrival, Phoune said that he was not able to say when Phoumi Vongvichit, the high-ranking special adviser to the negotiating team, would return to Vientiane, but he did hold open the possibility of a cease-fire within 15 days.

Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma, meanwhile, has completed his discussions in New Delhi on the future Indian role in the International Control Commission (ICC).

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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Communist resupply activity continues in the Laos panhandle, and initial indications are that logistic operations will be maintained there at least for the short term. Considerable numbers of vehicles have been noted on the move since the cease-fire went into effect, and preparations are being made to keep up supply movements.

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[redacted] the passes entering the Laos panhandle tend to corroborate the movement of significant numbers of vehicles since the cease-fire went into effect. On the first day following the cease-fire, [redacted] traffic levels remained about the same as on three of the preceding four days. The heaviest concentration of traffic was detected at the Ban Karai Pass and probably included a number of tracked vehicles.

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